

HAMNET BULLETIN FOR SUNDAY 6 February 2005

HAMNET is the Official Emergency Communications network of the South African Radio League that provides emergency communication to local, regional and national authorities, when requested to do so.

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HAMNET BULLETINS AROUND THE COUNTRY

KZN Sunday morning at 07H00 on their local VHF repeaters with a relay on 7.070MHz. KZN also have a Wednesday evening call-up and meeting on their 2M repeater system.

The National Bulletin at 17H00 CAT on 7,070MHz in the 40M band with a relay on 145,700MHz in the greater Johannesburg area.

The Gauteng North bulletin will follow immediately after the National Bulletin on 145,725MHz in the Pretoria area on Sundays.

North West Province have a club bulletin on Mondays, which includes a Hamnet segment at 19H00 local on 3,750Mhz in the 80M band as well as their local repeater on 145.737.5Mhz.

Hamnet Western Cape Province meets on Wednesdays at 20H30 local on 145:700MHz, relayed on 3,674MHz.

The HAMNET Bulletin is sent to all those of whom I have an e-mail address and also sent out on packet by Rudi, ZS6DX.

Please note, this bulletin is available for download from the web site of the SARL under the heading "HAMNET".

THE CODING OF A CALL-OUT

Codes are becoming a way of life in modern communication and Hamnet KZN are already using a code which I feel we should all adopt and use for the sake of continuity so all understand what we mean. However, let me hasten to add, when involved with emergency communication per se, we should avoid using any form or code as it may lead to misunderstanding.

The same code may already be in use by other units.

It s a plain and simple A B C code.

Should there be an event of sorts and Hamnet wish to alert members of the possibility of a call out, the A B C call out comes into play.

A (Alpha) = Indicating that there was an event of what ever nature and the possibility exists that members may have to be mobilised. In other word, it s a warning call to be on standby.

B (Bravo) = Indicates the situation is deteriorating and the chances are now positive that some of us may be called out or asked to organise network on the air.

C (Charlie) = This is a full alert. A network is probably by that stage already in operation and the net controller now takes full control and organises the team into a fully operational communications network.

Should you have a better idea, please let me know.

DISASTER MANAGEMENT

Following on from what was mentioned before, I wish to relate an article handed to me by Martin, ZS6MSG regarding the sad state of local Disaster Management up here in Gauteng and possibly in other parts of the country. Hence our renewed commitment to be prepared and available in times of emergency!

I recall a statement made last year by Steve ZS6XU that all around us, communication is falling apart. I now can see what he meant. Quoting from the article; “Disaster Management, caused by the centralisation of emergency services, exacerbated by politics, union activity, warring cabals and five new fire chiefs” in four years has decimated the service . The problems are further compounded by clashes over differing wages, levels of expertise, conditions of service, shifts and perks etc.

However, there is a light at the end of the tunnel. With the appointment of Dr. Audrey Gule, the first female chief officer, there is hope that she will be able to resuscitate the ailing emergency services.

One can only but hope that in the restructuring period, no major disaster occurs that could stretch current recourses to the limit. Although this is not our problem, when a call-out comes, let s be prepared to show that we are organised and ready to answer the call.

INTERESTING DISASTER FACTS

The aftermath of the December tsunami has produced some interesting information on what is happening on earth at present and what we can expect in future as the earth moves ever closer to its eventual end.

That may sound a bit alarming and far fetched, but not to worry, it probably will not happen in our lifetimes but the facts are beginning to prove that natural calamities and their intensities are on the increase.

Over the last few weeks, much has been said about catastrophes that have happened on earth and what we could expect in the years to come. A lot of this is based on the greenhouse effect which is no longer just speculation, but fact.

In a few years time, the North Pole will no longer freeze over in winter which will have a devastating effect on animal life in that region as we know it today.

The world has already seen a sharp increase in such “natural” disasters from about 100 per year in the early 1960 s to over 500 per year by the early 2000 s. It is not that earthquakes, tidal waves and other calamities have become stronger and more frequent, but also where people live and how they live there.

As technology allows or as poverty demands, rich and poor alike have pushed into floodplains or deserts, built on impossibly steep slopes and created vast, fragile cities along fault lines that tremble with alarming frequency.

Probably the largest “event” if one could do that, was the explosion of the Island of Krakatoa in Indonesia on the 26th of August, 1883. This explosion was so violent that it was heard 3,500 kilometres away and filled the air with volcanic ash and gasses. This ash drifted so far and wide that it was found in ice packs in the Arctic many years later.

In current times, it is suggested that a quake of 7.5 on the Richter scale will kill at least 50,000 people in Los Angeles or San Francisco. A quake of the same magnitude will kill more than a million people in Tehran simply because the technology of building construction in the States is far more advanced than in Teheran. It is further suggested that cities like Teheran, New Delhi and Istanbul are simply “rubble in waiting”.

We are at a period in Earth's history where we're living on an edge where things can go terribly wrong if we're not attentive. But at the same token, technology if correctly and timely applied could make the outcomes far better than they are now.

Tsunami monitoring devices are operational in the Pacific, but not in the Indian Ocean. This is now going to change in order to warn countries in the future should the same situation occur. The Cascadia fault which is 966 kilometres long in the Pacific North West had its last “correction” in the 1700 s. The feeling is that another is due, but when? Hence the monitoring devices which could warn islanders across the Pacific and larger countries as these waves travel at 700 kilometres an hour and depending on the scale of the quake, waves can reach 10 metres in height.

Finally, how did this “event” affect us on this delicate planet? The earthquake of 26 December did the following although these are just calculations at present and still need to be verified.

The “mean” North Pole shifted by about 2.5 cm (1 inch) in the direction of 145 degrees east of longitude.

The quake also affected the earth's shape. The earth's oblateness (flatness at the top and bottom and bulging at the equator) decreased by a small amount, making it more round. This also means that the distance at the equator around the world has decreased by a couple of millimetres.

The time of day was also affected. The average day, although you won't notice it, is 2.68 microseconds shorter. In other words, the earth is spinning just a little faster than it did before.

The two plates on the ocean floor that caused the earthquake are named the Burma Plate and the India Plate. The India Plate is slowly moving under the Burma Plate. The quake was caused when due to pressure from the plate moving under the other plate, there was a violent upward movement that caused the water to dissipate in all directions. This movement of water at the rate of 700KPh caused the tsunami.

Credit and acknowledgement to N.A.S.A and the New York Times for articles used in this bulletin.

MISSING PLANE ALERT

On Tuesday morning 18 January, Hamnet was activated to be on standby regarding a missing plane, an Aero Space aircraft with the registration N74780, on a flight from Wonderboom airfield north of Pretoria to Harrismith. The call was initiated by the brother of one of the passengers via Johan ZS5JL and eventually by Chris ZS5UF who managed to contact me on 7:070MHz.

I immediately made contact with AT & NS who informed me that they had already activated search parties.

The wreck of the plane was discovered the next day on a farm near Cornelia in the north eastern Free State. There were no survivors

The brother, Mr. Bekker, thanked us for our immediate response and our involvement in this unfortunate accident.

FINAL COMMENTS

It is with great pleasure that I wish to mention that Steve Baynes ZS6XU, has joined the Committee up here in Johannesburg.

Steve has a lot of experience in the communications field and we will benefit from this expertise.

Hamnet Western Cape is having a meeting in Worcester on either the 19th or the 26th of this month to plan their way ahead. I was e-mailed all the proposals by Pierre Tromp, ZR1PDT and it looks very interesting and constructive.

I hope you chaps have a good meeting and a good turnout.

And finally, welcome to all the ZR/ZU operators who may now join the ranks of the ZS fraternity on certain HF frequencies.

That is all for today.

Bulletin ends.